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SUBJECT: PM MANNING REPORTEDLY HAS SUCCESSFUL SURGERY IN CUBA

REF: PORT OF SPAIN 567

11. On December 17, Prime Minister Patrick Manning underwent a two-hour surgery at the Cimeq Hospital in Havana to remove a malignant tumor from his left kidney (ref). According to a press release from the Prime Minister's office, Manning's surgery was "very successful." Doctors will perform a pathology exam to determine what, if any, additional treatment is required. The media report a significant outpouring of good wishes, prayer and support for the PM from party members, local citizens and even opposition backers.

12. Up to the time of his surgery, Manning remained in contact with various Ministers and was said to be fully aware of daily government business. Manning expects to remain in Cuba until early January for post-operative care and will not likely campaign for the People's National Movement (PNM) before the January 19 local elections for the Tobago House of Assembly take place.

AUSTIN